

these scriptures are as obligatory on the conscience of the Christian as any other commandments which Jesus gave.

Human conceit, often arbitrarily, has been setting aside some portions of the scriptures as interpolations and as the crude fancies of unenlightened minds, in these recent times. Quite often the ground of such ruthless violence has been that they who did so could not, or would not understand the reason why a certain thing was said by Jesus. On this ground these plain teachings on the matter of oaths, whether civil or profane, have been set aside as having no application to the present day. The Brethren church in common with some others, e. g., the Quakers deem it not an unworthy task to insist on the observance of these words of Jesus and his apostle by Christians.

Perhaps nothing today disturbs minds thoughtful and reverent; minds which look for a life among Christians which is as unlike the life of the great world as was Christ's, more than a somewhat prevalent tendency to overlook the fact that Christ demands of Christians a life different from the life of the world. Paul exhorted the Roman Christians thus, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Rom. 12:1, 2. To Titus he wrote concerning Christ as follows, "Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus 2:14.

The Brethren believe that these are points which need more careful attention than they are receiving today. While the three divisions of the Brethren differ in the application of these scriptures, the Old Order Brethren applying it especially to the question of dress and insisting that the clothing of the Christian should be essentially different from that worn by the world, and that even an unnecessary button is to be prohibited; the German Baptist, or Conservative branch believing with the Old Order branch that it means the dress, and in accordance with such tenets hold that the male members should wear a peculiar coat and the sisters a peculiar form of bonnet; the third division known as Progressive Brethren holding that these scriptures should not be applied in this way, all three branches are agreed in the general belief that there should be a difference between the church and the world. The Old Orderers hold that the outward appearance is meant. The German Baptists that tho there may be some other application of the teaching yet a Christian in view of these scriptures should be peculiar in dress as well as other particulars of life, insisting on

a peculiar cut of coat for the men and of bonnet for the women. The Brethren, however, insist that the thing in which Christians should be peculiar, is not the mere outward matter of dress, but in that designated in the last quotation, "zealous of good works;" that the transformation should not be the external and too often pharisaical matter of a peculiar garment, but that of the mind and heart, the motives and purposes of life. The Brethren do believe that the Bible teaches modesty of dress. She believes that Peter's words to wives, "whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price," I Pet. 3:3, 4, contain a principle which in these days is not heralded enough, viz., the principle that it is character which God wants, and which really makes the man or woman.

The common sense of the race recognizes that the dude, the fop and the dandy, the woman whose chief concern is a beautiful face, a fine wardrobe and a marvelous jewel casket, are anomalies. In other words, people understand somewhat and will, by God's grace, come to perceive more yet that while graces of person and beautiful garments are all right when they are subordinated to graces of mind and heart, yet men are men not because of fine clothes and stylish fashions but because of character. It is increasing insistence on something higher than dress which the world now needs. Dress is too selfish in its effects on people. It is transformation of mind and heart which people need; transformation from the selfishness which would gloat over personal graces or elegant finery to the unselfishness which would abhor the sin of the thing while one newsboy walked barefoot and shivering in a snowstorm, or a factory girl is forced to keep soul and body together on her pittance per week.

We believe that the texts quoted relate to the whole man; the body in the matter of personal and social purity; the mind in its flights of imagination and fancy, in its ambitions and methods of thought; man's relations to his fellow-men in business, social and religious affairs. For instance we believe that instead of caring nothing for most men that Christians should love all men, that their dealings with them should show that love; that social intercourse should be a source of fellowship, and that friendship should be a divine sacrament; as holy and inspiring, as beneficial to those concerned and to the world, as is that other social sacrament, marriage. This all means a transformation from the tacit, but none the less real creed of

the world. "Every fellow for himself and the devil take the hindmost," to the ethics and the motives which alone can foster obedience to them, of the Sermon on the Mount, "Love your enemies, bless them which curse you; do good to them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise upon the evil and on the good and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?" And, as we sit beneath the spell of those words of Jesus spoken so long ago, yet as fresh and new and inspiring as the morning breeze of these days of spring, we cannot but feel that the world even yet has much need of transformation before it reaches such a plane of moral life. Surely in these days of stock-jobbery, board-of-trade, gambling, competitive business, throat-cutting and growing hatred between capitol and labor, something very like this is needed to bring peace out of the turmoil, love and good will out of the clashing and selfish wranglings! What is more needed than that men shall learn that Christianity is not simply giving intellectual assent to certain propositions, however true; not simply getting one's name on a church book and being received into a church by any method whatsoever; but that to be a Christian means to be transformed by getting a new mind, new thoughts and new purposes; in short, by receiving "the mind of Christ?" What is more demanded by God of our church life than that we understand that Christianity is the practice of the Golden Rule in business and society, as regards our fellow men, and that as regards God we love him with all the strength of our affections and moral being? If, as some claim we cannot do that as society is now constituted, then let us get a constitution of society which will enable us so to do.

This brings me to remark that the Brethren church believes that the spirit and life of the primitive church at its best is ideal for the church of every age. When men were controlled by an enthusiasm as unselfish as it was unusual; as mighty to make men unselfish and heroic as it was pretending in the extent of its claims; as fearless in the face of appalling dangers as it was humble and unostentatious, we believe they had a spirit resulting in lives and deeds to which all may look back as almost ideal. Never was there such a spirit of loving brotherhood so widespread, so largely unselfish, having so little of hypocrisy. Never, perhaps was there shown a more unselfish interest in the welfare of their very persecutors than in those days immediately succeeding the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.